

# Highlights of the Consolidated Appropriations Act

## For Human Services Leaders

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The COVID-19 crisis requires a Whole Family response from state, local and tribal leaders. Congress passed The Consolidated Appropriations Act (H.R. 133), which is a \$900 billion COVID relief and \$1.4 trillion omnibus government funding package for the 2021 federal fiscal year. Below are selected portions of the Consolidated Appropriations Act for human services and other programs targeting vulnerable children and families. Please review the full legislative text [here](#) for additional details.

### **ACF**

The Consolidated Appropriations Act provided \$24.7 billion in regular funding for ACF programs, and \$10.25 billion in additional funding to support early childhood programs and childcare providers during the pandemic.

### **Child Care**

The Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) was provided \$5.9 billion for 2021 as well as an additional \$10 billion for pandemic relief for child care providers. The pandemic funding can be used to pay for child care providers' costs or to assist families with copayments and tuition payments.

The Act provides \$10.7 billion for making payments under the Head Start Act, including \$10 million to migrant and seasonal Head Start programs and \$4 million to maintain the Tribal Colleges and Universities Head Start Partnership Program. To support Head Start providers' continuous ability to safely serve low-income children and families during the pandemic, Congress provided \$250 million.

### **Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)**

Congress extended the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Block Grant program through September 2021. Despite rules governing TANF work participation standards, HHS can reduce or waive the penalty on states for failing to meet the TANF work participation standard.

### **Children's Bureau**

To support the stability of older youth during the pandemic, the Act allows older foster youth to continue

in, or return to, foster care while there is a public health emergency. The costs of serving these older youth can be paid by the Chafee Foster Care Independent Living Program. The Chafee Foster Care Program for Successful Transition to Adulthood received \$43 million for Education and Training Vouchers, plus an additional \$50 million to support program recipients with education and training needs as a result of the pandemic.

Congress provided the Community Based Child Abuse Prevention program \$5 million, and the Child Welfare Services \$268.7 million. The Act also provides \$90.1 million for Child Abuse State Grants to help States continue to develop and implement plans of safe care, and provides flexibilities in the Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program for the duration of the public health emergency.

### **Child Support**

Individuals who owe back child support will not have arrearages taken out of their stimulus check. The Act provides \$600 stimulus checks for individuals making up to \$75,000 per year, \$1,200 for couples making up to \$150,000, and \$600 for each dependent child under the age of 17.

## **Whole Family Approach to COVID-19 Response**

### **Food and Nutrition**

The Act increases the monthly value of SNAP by 15% through June 2021 and excludes any Pandemic Unemployment Assistance a person receives from the calculation of their SNAP benefit amount. As long as there is a COVID-19 public health emergency, college students may now be eligible for SNAP if their family lacks the resources to pay for their education or if they are eligible to participate in a federal or state work-study program.

The Women, Infants and Children (WIC) program is provided \$5.75 billion. Children's nutritional programs were provided resources for the free or reduced-price school lunch program, \$552 million for the Summer Food Service Program, \$42 million for the Summer EBT program, and \$21 million for the WIC farmers market nutrition program.

### **Parents as Workers**

To address the education, skills training, and employment needs of people during the pandemic, Congress provided \$2.85 billion for programs that fall under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), \$185 million to expand Registered Apprenticeship opportunities -- particularly in new industries or for underserved populations -- and \$45 million for the Strengthening Community College Training Grants program, which improves colleges' ability to meet the needs of local employers and the workforce

development system.

The Act provides tax deductions for tuition-related expenses, allows an employer tax credit for paid family and medical leave for employees until March 2021, and expands the CARES Act employee retention tax credit. It also provides \$48 million for the Minority Business Development Agency to help the agency fulfill its mission to grow minority-owned businesses.

## **Education for Children and Parents**

Congress provided funding to states and educational institutions to ensure continuous operations and safe conditions. The funding for states, which is more than \$4 billion in the Governors Emergency Education Relief Fund, is to be distributed to elementary and secondary schools, colleges, and education-related organizations. Separately, \$20.2 billion was provided in the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund to support colleges through the pandemic by covering lost revenue, technology costs, financial aid for students, and other pandemic-related costs.

The Act gave the Child Care Access Means Parents in School (CCAMPIS) program \$55 million to provide grants to colleges that offer child care on campus for student-parents, faculty, staff, and/or the community. Operations of the Health Profession Opportunity Grant (HPOG) program were extended through September 2021.

Congress passed several provisions that strengthen the U.S. Department of Education's (ED) focus on human service programs. For instance, \$5 million is available for basic needs grants for colleges; colleges located near a concentration of TANF and/or SNAP recipients are among the priority targets for grant funds. In addition, the ED Secretary must now send information about federal means-tested benefits to students with low incomes. Finally, the ED Secretary must develop an "interagency coordination plan" to improve awareness of college financial aid, in partnership with the Secretaries of HHS, Labor, Agriculture, HUD, and others.

## **Health**

The Act appropriates \$2.8 billion for the Public Health and Social Services Emergency Fund, \$6 billion for the SAMHSA (with at least \$125 million of the funds allocated to tribes or tribal-affiliated/-serving organizations), \$7.5 billion for the HRSA, and \$62 million for the Office of Minority Health.

To support the safe distribution of COVID-19 vaccinations, Congress provided \$8.75 billion to the CDC for state, tribal, territorial, and local public health departments to distribute and monitor vaccinations. \$300 million of that funding is targeted to the distribution of the vaccine to high-risk and underserved populations.

The Public Health and Social Services Emergency Fund received \$22.4 billion to improve testing, contract tracing, and monitoring activities, particularly among high-risk and underserved populations, and \$3 billion for hospital and health care provider reimbursements.

## **Housing and Homelessness**

The Act provides \$15 million for the Job Plus Initiative, which provides grants to support public housing residents in the pursuit of employment and increased earnings.

The Act made several investments to support homelessness programs. First, it provided \$3 billion in Homeless Assistance Grants, of which \$2.6 billion is reserved for the Continuum of Care program and the Rural Housing Stability Assistance; tribes or their designees are now allowed to apply for, or receive, funds from the Continuum of Care program. Second, \$290 million was designated for the Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG) program. And third, \$82 million is available for the Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program.

Housing Choice Vouchers will receive \$25.8 billion, which will include \$43 million in vouchers for survivors of domestic violence, families with children, veterans, and people experiencing unsheltered homelessness.

To promote the consideration of social determinants of health, including housing and homelessness, Congress established a \$10 million pilot project and a \$25 billion rental assistance fund to be administered by the Department of the Treasury.

Finally, to provide homeowners relief from high service costs or past due amounts for drinking or waste water services, Congress provided \$638 million for a new effort in the Low-Income Home Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP).

## **Small Business Assistance**

The COVID-19 relief bill provides \$284 billion for the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) and other small business loan programs. The loan programs require that eligible borrowers must have 300 employees or fewer and can prove a year-over-year quarterly revenue reduction of at least 25%. Loan forgiveness procedures were also simplified for PPP loans of \$150,000 or less.

## **Broadband Internet Access Service**

The Act provides funding for several initiatives that will improve the connectivity to needed services for students, families, and unemployed workers. Funding will be allocated to: a new \$3.2 billion Emergency Broadband Benefit that gives a \$50 per month discount for families with low incomes (or \$75 for families on tribal lands); \$1 billion in grants for tribal broadband programs; \$300 million for broadband expansion,

with a focus on rural areas; \$285 million for a new Office of Minority Broadband Initiatives that will run a program with pilot sites near colleges that are Minority-Serving Institutions; and \$250 million for telehealth services.

## **Child Poverty**

The Act directs \$1 million for a Child Welfare Intergenerational Poverty Study that will analyze and make recommendations on how to reduce intergenerational poverty and improve child welfare. The study is meant to identify causes that perpetuate intergenerational poverty from childhood to adulthood, racial disparities and contributing structural factors, and how assistance and education programs may effect intergenerational poverty.



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